Using Academic Language

**Academic language is the right kind of language to use in an essay. It is formal and professional and will make your essay sound impressive and polished – as though you know what you’re talking about!**

**NOTE: these rules are for certain situations only. You would not use this kind of language for a friendly email or a fictional story.**

1. **Use full words instead of contractions.**

*Contractions* “**It’s** obvious culture **can’t** be…”

*(WRONG)* “**That’s** why loyalty **&** duty **don’t**…”

“**E.g.** Chi is seen as powerful, mysterious, **etc.**”

*Full Words* “**It is** obvious that culture **cannot** be…”,

*(RIGHT)* “**That is** why loyalty **and** duty **do not**…”

“**For example**, Chi is seen as powerful, mysterious, **and so on**.”

1. **Use words (not numerals) for numbers below 100.**

*Numerals* “This is the **1st** example…”

*(WRONG)* “When she is about **8** years old…”



*Words* “This is the **first** example…”

*(RIGHT)*  “When she is about **eight** years old…”

1. **Don’t use slang or casual language.** Choose bigger and more formal words than you’d normally use (AS LONG AS you still know what they mean). Never use multiple exclamation points.

*Slang* “Mulan’s **dad** then **rushed** in and **grabbed** his **knife!!!!!!**”

*(WRONG)* “There are **lots of** reasons why **things changed**…”



*Formal*  “Mulan’s **father** then **hastened** in and **seized** his **sword**.”

*(RIGHT)* “There are **many** reasons why **conditions varied**…”

1. **Use sophisticated transition words.** Where possible, avoid the simple FANBOYS versions.

*Simple* and, but, so, or

*(WRONG)*



*Sophisticated* in addition, however, consequently

*(RIGHT)*

1. **Nominalise (turn verbs into nouns).**

*Verb form* Mulan **was brave** and she **protected** her family…

*(WRONG)* Mushu **failed** to sense danger which **caused**…



*Nominalised* Mulan’s **bravery** ensured the **protection** of her family...

*(RIGHT)* Mushu’s **failure** to sense danger was the **cause** of…

1. **Use the 3rd person point of view (‘he, she, they’). Avoid 1st or 2nd person (‘I, me, you, we, us’).**

*First Person*  “**I** think **you** can see from this…”

*(WRONG)* “This makes **us** think…”



*Third Person* “From this it **can be seen**…”

*(RIGHT)* “This makes **the viewer** think…”

1. **Be objective (unbiased) and impersonal. State facts, not opinions.**

*Subjective*  **I believe** that this is **nonsense**, because…

*(WRONG)* **In my opinion** this is a wonderful example…



*Objective* This point **may not be** **accurate**, because…

*(RIGHT)* This example is **worth** **considering**…

1. **Be specific. Avoid vague generalisations.**

*Vague* We can learn **something** from this….

*(WRONG)* There are **many** other examples…

Several **things** can be seen…



*Specific* **What** can be learned from this is (**x, y**)…

*(RIGHT)* **Another** example is when Mulan says (**x, y**)….

**One** reason is that (**x, y**)…

1. **Use the correct terminology to refer to different film versions.** Put the title of the film in italics and the date it was released in brackets.

*Slang* In **the old one**,the father…

*(WRONG)* In the **new movie**, she is…



*Version, Title, Year* In ***Mulan* (1998)**, the father*…*

*(RIGHT)* In the **2020 adaption** of the legend of Mulan…

In the cartoon **version** of the **film**, the characters…